



Fabulous Fox River Water Trail  
Core Development Team  
Wisconsin-Illinois

For Immediate Release

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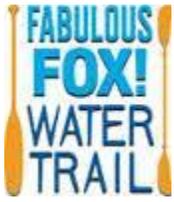
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### **Fabulous Fox! Core Team Unveils Water Trail Development**

The Fox River Summit, held in Burlington, Wisconsin on March 22, 2019 was the venue for unveiling of the [Fabulous Fox! River Water Trail](#) website. The Core Development Team (CDT), representing Wisconsin and Illinois, was present to raise the curtain on a new website with interactive segment maps of the over 200-mile water trail. Visitors will find an overview of the water trail from its headwaters in Waukesha, Wisconsin to its confluence with the Illinois River in Ottawa, Illinois. Paddlers planning an excursion can find access site descriptions, river miles, hazards, dams and portages, as well as amenities such as drinking water, shelter, restroom and picnic facilities, and boat rentals. The site will also include links to the area tourism entities to help paddlers with dining, shopping, and lodging information and a schedule of events and activities for a full planning resource.

The CDT also shared the new brochure which tells the story of the trail development with a map and features of the trail. The team is planning to enlist a distribution company to stock tourist outlets such as hotels, transportation hubs, and attractions along the Milwaukee-Chicago corridor. The team is seeking funding for the distribution of 50,000 brochures and welcomes donations which can be sent to Karen Miller, Illinois Co-Chair, at 719 S. Batavia Ave., Geneva IL 60134

Tom Slawski, CDT member and organizer of the Fox River Summit wrote a successful grant proposal to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Surface Waters Grant to create the website and printed materials educating the public about the Fox River, the water trail, and stewardship of the river. To distinguish the trail from the Wisconsin Fox River, the team chose the alliterative Fabulous Fox River Water Trail to name the trail.



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Under the guidance of Angie Tornes of the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, the CDT has worked on the trail development for nearly four years and will begin writing a management plan of best practices to submit with its application for inclusion in the [National Water Trail System](#). To ensure that the trail has been fully vetted, the team will hold public engagement workshops in six locations along the river trail in the spring and summer. Locations and dates are to be announced soon on the website and through local media outlets. The workshops, open to the public, will invite all interested parties, particularly paddlers, to view the maps, the access sites, and segment descriptions and offer feedback. The team will be looking for data that may have been missed and suggestions for improvements as the team prepares a gap analysis.

The water trail initiative began as a spark of interest at a Fox River Summit several years ago when Angie Tornes of the National Park Service spoke about her work on trail development. When Greg Farnham, who had worked on the Rock River Water Trail spoke at a later summit, Karen Miller, Kane County, and Barbara Messick and Rebecca Ewald of Waterford were hooked on the idea of creating a trail on the Fox River. Farnham agreed to lend his experience, and the group asked Tornes to meet with them and Tom Slawski, of Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission and summit organizer. The group received a grant for technical assistance from the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, which provided the expertise of Angie Tornes. From the very start, the group intended to conclude the trail development with an application to be added to the list twenty water trails in the National Water Trail System. After several years of collecting and documenting access sites, paddling the river to identify hazards, dams, and portages, and on land to document parking and site amenities, the information has been incorporated into the website and interactive maps. Scores of volunteers hit the waterway to collect the information and take photos, all in preparation for the interactive maps, providing paddlers with the information to create a safe and pleasant paddling experience.



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The team grew with the technical and planning help of Rick Kania of the Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission at the urging on Waukesha, Racine, and Kenosha County executives. In Illinois, Brian Daly of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) joined the team to provide the same help. As the CDT looked beyond the collection of data to promoting the trail, it looked to the marketing expertise of convention and visitors bureaus (CVB) to promote the river trail in their communities. Jaki Berggren of Visit McHenry in Illinois, and Dave Blank of Real Racine in Wisconsin joined the team representing tourism agencies along the waterway. The team is proud and thankful for the work of all the team members and the dozens of volunteers who collected data to create the Fabulous Fox! River Water Trail.

-30-

ENCLOSURE: Photo of Core Development Team Members

Pictured Left to Right: Karen Miller, Illinois Co-Chair; Rick Kania, Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWPC); Matt Kania, Map Hero; Tom Slawski, SEWPC; Angie Tornes, National Park Service; Dave Blank, Real Racine CVB; and Barb Messick, Wisconsin Co-Chair.

Not Pictured: Brian Daly, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), Jaki Berggren, Visit McHenry CVB.